



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Editor's note: The MSD Washington Township Book Drive will be held September 4-7, 2007. In addition to the MSD Washington Township book drive. A public drive will be held on September 6, 2007 at the Colts Kickoff Game from 6:30-8:30 p.m. outside of the RCA Dome gates.

Elementary School Kids Team with DCS and the Colts to Help Others

INDIANAPOLIS (September 4, 2007)– The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) and the Indianapolis Colts have teamed with the MSD Washington Township Schools this week to host an elementary school wide book collection. The book drive is a part of the Books For Youth program which aims to bring awareness to the growing need for community involvement in caring for Indiana children by giving every foster youth and young adult 25 age-appropriate books that they can call their own. The drive is currently taking place in all nine Washington Township Elementary Schools.

DCS, the Colts, and the Washington Township Schools have challenged the students to bring in new and gently used books. The books will then be sorted by Marion County librarians and a smart hand-off will be made to foster youth and young adults throughout Marion County. The challenge for the students is to not only collect the most books, but to learn about giving to others while reinforcing the importance of reading. At the end of the drive, the school that collects the most books will be rewarded with a Blue Friday Pep Rally.

This special Books For Youth project brings awareness to the growing need for community involvement in caring for Indiana children. The goal is to place 25 age appropriate books into the hands of each foster youth and young adult by making a smart handoff to Indiana's youth. The program is being piloted in Marion County and will eventually be implemented statewide.

"By giving children access to their own books you are giving them the knowledge that they are important. Through the Books For Youth program, foster children will have the opportunity to have a connection to education and reading more easily than before," said James Payne, DCS Director.

Through the Books For Youth program, books are collected through community donation drives, sorted by local children's librarians, placed in bags and distributed by volunteers. The program is being piloted in Marion County and will eventually be implemented statewide.

"The Metropolitan School District of Washington Township is pleased to work in partnership with DCS and the World Champion Indianapolis Colts in the Books for Youth Campaign. This important effort will provide books to foster youth and young adults. Reading is the key to success in school and in life, and this campaign will make positive differences in the lives of many young people. We encourage our students, staff, and community to support and encourage the campaign by donating new and gently used books at their favorite elementary school. We appreciate the effort and support of the Colts Organization as well DCS in this important effort," stated Dr. Mervilde Stacy, Superintendent of MSD Washington Township.

The Books For Youth Program is sponsored by the Indiana Department of Child Services, the Indianapolis Colts and the Marion County Public Library System. To find out more on how to hold a donation drive or become a community partner, please visit www.IN.gov/dcs/booksforyouth or call 234-KIDS.

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Protecting our children, families and future